

310.28**WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Guidelines****Qualifications and Requirements**

**Required
experience**

A breastfeeding peer counselor must currently be a WIC participant or must have been a WIC participant in the past and must have **successfully** breastfed at least one baby. She must have a telephone and be willing to make **contacts** from home. Breastfeeding peer counselors must also be available outside the usual clinic operating hours to mothers who are breastfeeding.

**Desirable
experience and
skills**

The following experiences and skills are desirable:

- Enthusiasm about breastfeeding and desires to help other mothers enjoy a positive breastfeeding experience;
 - Good communication skills;
 - **Basic computer skills;**
 - Demographic similarities with the WIC participants served by the local agency such as age, ethnicity, and language; and
 - Reliable transportation.
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**Physical
requirements**

This position may require lifting up to **25** pounds.

**Travel
requirements**

Travel to outlying clinic sites may be required. Travel may be required to participate in continuing education events.

**Supervision of
counselor**

The breastfeeding peer counselor is responsible to the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator of the local employing agency.

Responsibilities

Introduction

The breastfeeding peer counselor may have all or any combination of the responsibilities in the following areas.

Client contacts

A breastfeeding peer counselor's clinic responsibilities may include:

- Counseling pregnant and breastfeeding WIC mothers at scheduled intervals determined by the local WIC agency;
 - Counseling pregnant and breastfeeding WIC mothers at the WIC clinic;
 - Making established periodic contacts with all assigned clients;
 - Providing basic breastfeeding information, support and encouragement to new mothers including the benefits of breastfeeding, overcoming common barriers, and getting a good start with breastfeeding;
 - Educating mothers on how to prevent and manage common breastfeeding concerns;
 - Referring mothers for information and services according to agency protocols;
 - Attending and assisting with prenatal breastfeeding classes and breastfeeding support groups for WIC participants; and
 - Assisting WIC staff in promoting the breastfeeding peer counseling program through special projects, outreach activities, and duties as assigned.
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Training

A breastfeeding peer counselor's training responsibilities include:

- Completing the initial Loving Support classes to become a breastfeeding peer counselor,
 - Observing other breastfeeding peer counselors, WIC dietitians and nurses, lactation consultants or other breastfeeding experts as they help mothers and babies to breastfeed,
 - Attending scheduled breastfeeding peer counselor group meetings and breastfeeding conferences and workshops as appropriate,
 - Mentoring newly hired Peer Counselors as assigned,
 - Use of the electronic WIC electronic data system,
 - Reading assigned books and materials and viewing assigned videos and DVDs provided by the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator, and
 - Continuing education as needed.
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Recordkeeping

A breastfeeding peer counselor's recordkeeping responsibilities include:

- Keeping each client's information strictly confidential,
 - Maintaining accurate records of all contacts made with assigned mothers using the WIC electronic data system, and
 - Completing and submitting activity reports as required by the local WIC agency.
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